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Agenda item 75

QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION

Note by the Secretary-General

Pursuant to the request contained in a communication dated 8 November 1991 addressed to the Secretary-General by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the text of a resolution adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-sixth session.

Annex

PROMOTION OF PRESS FREEDOM IN THE WORLD

(26 C/Resolution 4.3)

[Original: English and
French]

The General Conference,

Recalling 25 C/Resolution 104 which it adopted following examination of the draft Medium-Term Plan for 1990-1995 in regard to major programme area IV, "Communication in the service of humanity",

Noting with satisfaction the decisions taken at the 136th session of the Executive Board concerning this major programme area,

Welcoming the scope provided in this programme for activities aimed at encouraging press freedom, as well as the independence and pluralism of the private, public and other media in all regions,

Recognizing that a free, pluralistic and independent press is an essential component of any democratic society,

Considering that the Seminar on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press (29 April-3 May 1991), organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations in Windhoek, Namibia, acted as a catalyst in the process of encouraging press freedom, independence and pluralism in Africa,

Congratulating the Director-General and the secretariat on this initiative,

Noting with satisfaction the cooperation that developed at that meeting between UNESCO and the professional media associations,

Noting with interest the Declaration adopted by participants at the Windhoek seminar which provides a reference for the development of independent and pluralist media in Africa,

Thanking the Director-General for his action aimed at providing a positive follow-up to the recommendations made at the seminar, especially those mentioned in the annex to the Windhoek Declaration,

Invites the Director-General:

/...

(a) To extend to other regions of the world the action taken so far in Africa and Europe to encourage press freedom and to promote the independence and pluralism of the media;

(b) To commemorate the anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration adopted on 3 May 1991;

(c) To transmit to the General Assembly of the United Nations the wish expressed by the States members of UNESCO to have 3 May declared "International Press Freedom Day";

(d) To examine with the Secretary-General of the United Nations ways and means of issuing a joint report on the progress of press freedom in the world to mark this day.



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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE

LETTER DATED 14 NOVEMBER 1991 FROM THE CONTROLLER ADDRESSED
TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE ON THE
PROGRAMME BUDGET IMPLICATIONS OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

My attention has been drawn to the fact that a number of draft resolutions with programme budget implications have given rise to some difficulties in the various Main Committees of the General Assembly. I feel that I ought to share with you some observations.

By section VI of its resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters. It also reaffirmed the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and expressed its concern at the tendency of its substantive Committees and other intergovernmental bodies to involve themselves in administrative and budgetary matters.

The budgetary process adopted by the General Assembly under its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986 provides that the programme budget include a contingency fund to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the proposed programme budget. I would like to recall in that connection that the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, which was submitted by the Secretary-General a few months ago, is the outcome of an extensive and complex process of preparation which reflects the collective decision of Member States as expressed in the medium-term plan adopted by the General Assembly for the period 1992-1997. Its programmatic content was reviewed, to the extent possible, by the competent sectoral and regional legislative bodies, prior to its comprehensive review by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-first session. For these reasons, it is our understanding that new legislative mandates resulting in programme budget implications and the application of the mechanism of the contingency fund would be of a rather exceptional nature, especially in a budget year.

Lastly, I am concerned at the difficulties which have arisen in implementing a key provision in the new budget process as it relates to the operation of the contingency fund, namely that each statement of programme budget implications should contain a precise indication of how redeployments of resources from low-priority areas or modifications of existing activities would be applied in case it is not possible to finance all or part of the additional requirements from the contingency fund. While continuing efforts will be made by this Office and the substantive departments concerned to implement this provision more fully, I believe that the attention of all the members of the Committee should be drawn to the fact that, in the absence of such identification, the additional activities which would be mandated by the draft resolution would have to be deferred until a later biennium, should the resources available within the contingency fund be exceeded.

I am keenly aware of the difficulties faced by every Committee in carrying out its programme of work and it is my hope that these observations, rather than complicating your task and that of the Committee, will indeed be of some assistance in the decision-making process. For that reason, I should be most grateful if this letter could be circulated as a document of the Committee.

(Signed) Kofi ANNAN
